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RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 8854
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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 2736
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1323
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 000701

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SUBJECT: INDIAN NSA NARAYANAN DISCUSSES RUSSIAN MIG-35,
CONCERNS ABOUT CHINA, PAKISTAN WITH LT GENERAL MAPLES

NEW DELHI 00000701 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Ambassador David Mulford, Reason 1.5 (B,D)

1. (S) Summary: Lieutenant General Maples, Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, met with Indian National Security Advisor MK Narayanan on February 8th to discuss joint efforts to increase U.S.-India defense cooperation. NSA Narayanan explained India's longstanding concern about Chinese defense sales to Pakistan, and asked that the United States share information to help India better assess the threat from both countries. Narayanan responded positively to DCM's demarche on the need for India to sign the Communications and Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA), and commented that "what the (Indian) military wants it gets." Narayanan also revealed that the Russian delegation, which accompanied President Putin on his Republic Day trip to India, had given him a full briefing on the MIG-35, claiming that the plane could "hover like a helicopter." DCM and Defense Attache explained the superiority of the F-16 and F-18 to the MIG-35, and offered to arrange for a full briefing on the two aircrafts at Narayanan's convenience. End Summary.

Concerns about China, Pakistan

2. (S) Lt General Maples discussed ways to expand India's defense cooperation with the U.S. during his February 8th meeting with NSA MK Narayanan. Narayanan briefed Lt General Maples on his growing concern about defense cooperation between China and Pakistan. India's relations with China are

now very cordial, "even warm," he explained. The only remaining issue is the border, and even there, with each meeting India and China make small steps toward resolving their differences. He qualified that there has been no leap forward but, when Prime Minister Singh meets with President Hu, their body language is always positive and their words are warm. He said this is because there is a widening understanding of their simultaneous rise in the world. He explained further that India is trying to bring its relationship with Pakistan back to the level it enjoys with other countries. Nonetheless, India is very concerned about the military technology that China is transferring to Pakistan. He said India was very worried about whether either country will be able to change its underlying defense doctrine with the advances both countries are making. He said they were very concerned about China and Pakistan and the militarization of space. Finally, Narayanan said his country was worried about Pakistan's claim that it could destroy U.S. and Indian defense capability.

2b. (S) Narayanan argued that we need to do better in our intelligence exchange relationship, contrasting our "excellent" diplomatic cooperation with more restrained and modest intelligence ties. As usual, he spoke expansively of the U.S.- India strategic relationship.

Signing CISMOA

13. (S) DCM demarched Narayanan on the need to sign fundamental documents to increase the level of U.S. cooperation on defense and intelligence sharing issues. He said it was important that India sign the CISMOA in order to facilitate information sharing with India. He said this was

NEW DELHI 00000701 002.2 OF 002

the next agreement that needed to be signed in order to facilitate military cooperation with India. NSA Narayanan responded positively, saying that "what the military wants it gets," but that he would still have to defend his position to the Indian Cabinet.

MIG-35 vs F-16 or F-18

14. (S) Narayanan said a delegation from Russia's Defense Department had given him a full briefing on the MIG-35 during President Putin's recent trip to New Delhi. He said they had given him the "hard sell," claiming that the MIG essentially could hover like a helicopter. Defense Attache explained that this was an inaccurate portrayal of the MIG-35's capability, and that it was essentially the MIG-29 with some avionics changes. DCM further explained that this was an opportune time for India to work with the U.S. companies because both Boeing and Lockheed, who produce the F-18 and F-16, respectively, were from the private sector, and they could partner with Indian private companies to produce new systems. Narayanan asked that the U.S. orchestrate a similar briefing on the F-16 and F-18 as the Russian delegation had provided for India.

India Looking to Expand Cooperation

15. (S) Comment: As one of India's top decision-makers on defense cooperation, Narayanan's input will be crucial to determining if India will choose U.S. F-16 or F-18 fighter planes over the competitors. He was quite forthcoming in his discussion of China's capability, and it is clear that he sees information exchange as his newest measure of the U.S. commitment to advancing ties to India. He seemed infatuated by what the Russian-led delegation told him about the MIG-35, and we need to take advantage of his willingness to learn more about the F-16 and F-18. He is extremely interested in information we have about China's military capabilities, and this may provide an opportunity to press India to sign the

CISMOA and expand India's reciprocal cooperation with us.
End comment.
MULFORD